CHAPTER III

THE BEGINNINGS AND GROWTH OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF ISLE OF WIGHT COUNTY

Isle of Wight education has been followed through two historical periods; first, through that period beginning with the earliest settlements in the County and ending with the American Revolution; and, second, through that period beginning with the new Nation and ending with the War Between the States. Through both of these periods trends to the public schools of today have been manifested.

From earliest times Isle of Wight people have shown an interest in education. Captain John Moon with his will for schooling destitutes; Henry King providing one hundred acres of land for a free school; Elizabeth Smith establishing a free school; individuals providing for the education of their children; the patronage of the old field schools; groups of patrons forming companies to secure a school and teachers; establishing academies; attempts of the Isle of Wight School Commissioners to take the stigma of pauperism out of the schooling of poor children; - these indicate interest.

Then there was a trend to making education more universal; not only to educate the boys of the County, but to educate the girls as well.

Another trend was to enrich the curriculum; to provide courses in more than reading and writing for the girls, and

reading, writing and arithmetic for the boys.

Evidence in the years already studied was an inclination to secure better prepared teachers and teachers qualified to teach more than reading and writing.

Clear also was the trend for better support and control of the schools by the State. The first schools were supported by individuals for the education of their children; then several families combined in financing a school; later companies were formed and teachers employed; then came the corporations with its trustees; and almost simultaneously with the academies came the School Commissioners with their little financial support from the State. Isle of Wight education was changing from an individual matter to a State concern.

After the War

Rebuilding in Virginia after the War Between the States was quite a problem in which Isle of Wight County had its part. The influx of the Carpetbaggar, devastated homes and public buildings, loss of man power with the flower of the State's manhood, dead, the enormous public debt, - all of War's misery and defeat was that of Virginia's. Even the poorly paid teachers had been called from the school room, never to return. The Literary Fund had vanished into smoke. Virginia and Isle of Wight County faced a problem in education as well as in other functions.

Added to the difficulties consequent to a disastrous

war fought mostly on its soil, was a missionary zeal, a zeal directed to the immediate education of the liberated slaves. To the Legislature of Virginia and to legislatures of other Southern States forming the Confederacy came representatives of various groups and ideals. There were the native whites, sometimes of the conservative element, sometimes of the radical or scalawag leaning; there were the Negro freemen; there were those migrating gentlemen, who vulture-like, packed their carpetbags and rushed in to devour their prey. Many of the laws suggested and often passed by the Legislatures made up by this motley crowd were aimed at the educational improvement of the Negro.

For several years after the War, Virginia remained a military district, a military district because the State had rejected the fourteenth amendment. In the Fall of 1867-1868, the military commander of the State ordered a Constitutional Convention. To this Convention the counties and cities of Virginia sent twenty-two natives, and thirteen scalawags. Thirty-three of the membership of the Convention were men born in other States or foreign countries. Seventy-two of the members were radicals, thirty-three conservatives. Attempts in this Convention, as well as in other Legislatures to provide for mixed schools, failed.

State Provision for Public Schools

The new Constitution of Virginia adopted in 1869 provided

for a system of public schools. Thomas Jefferson's Virginia had been strangely slow in putting into its governing instrument provision for the education of its boys and girls. In 1851 it mentioned education in making provision for one-half of the capitation taxes to be applied "to the purpose of education in primary and free schools." Eighteen years later at a Convention ordered by a military commander, Virginia adopted a Constitution requiring the next Legislature to provide a system of public schools.

Some Provisions of the 1869 Constitution

The Virginia Constitution adopted on July 6, 1869 contained provisions for a complete system of public education in the State. Significant items were that the General Assembly should provide a uniform system of public free schools, and for its gradual, equal and full introduction into all of the counties of the State by 1876, or as much earlier as practicable; the General Assembly should have power to make laws which would not permit parents or guardians to allow children to grow up in ignorance or vagrancy; the General Assembly should establish as soon as practicable, normal schools, and might establish agricultural schools; the General Assembly was to set aside a permanent and perpetual "Literary Fund;" each county might raise additional sums by a tax on property, not to exceed five mills on a dollar; and the General Assembly should have the power to foster all grades of schools.

Forces at Work in Virginia Against Public Schools

Many forces in Virginia were at work against the new public school system. The Church schools, the hostility of the aristocratic class, the financial condition of the State and its political sub-divisions, the stigma of the "pauper school" idea, and the lack of prepared teachers, added to the problem facing the State Superintendent of Schools and local school officials, yet to be selected.

Organization in Isle of Wight County

The next General Assembly of Virginia speedily provided for a system of public schools in Virginia. There was little delay in the organization of the Isle of Wight County public school system. Col. E. M. Morrison, once a teacher in the old Smithfield Academy, was appointed by the Virginia Senate the first division superintendent of the schools for the County, and qualified October 1, 1870.

Col. E. M. Morrison

Col. Morrison was born in Smithfield, Virginia, August 21, 1841. He was a graduate of Virginia Military Institute, and while at that institution, a student under "Stonewall" Jackson. Before the War Between the States he had engaged in private school work at Smithfield, being assistant principal first and later principal of the Smithfield Academy. With the outbreak of the War he entered the military service of his

State. From the rank of second lieutenant, he rose to the rank of colonel, in which capacity he commanded the 15th Virginia Infantry of Pickett's Division. At the end of the War he returned to his native county to resume his profession as surveyor and teacher in Smithfield. In 1870 he was appointed to superintend the free school system of Isle of Wight County.

Isle of Wight's First School Boards

Superintendent Morrison's first task was the selection of three district school boards. The Minute Book of 1870 shows the following organization:

Newport District

Col. Wm. H. Darden	Chairman	3 year term
Wm. D. Folk	Clerk	2 " "
Henry R. Parker		1 " "

Hardy District

E. P. Womble	Chairman	3 year term
R. H. Randolph	Clerk	2 " "
A. H. White		1 " "

Windsor District

Alex Asburne	Chairman	3 year term
Thomas J. Clements	Clerk	2 " "
Jesse D. Council		1 " "

It is significant to this study that in the personnel of the three district school boards of 1870 were found Col. Wm. Darden, Chairman of the Newport Board, a School Commissioner in 1857 and 1861 of the ante bellum system; Mr. E. P. Womble, Chairman of the Hardy District School Board also served

as School Commissioner for the same years; and Thomas J. Clements, Clerk of the Windsor Board, who also served as Superintendent of Schools in 1860 under the School Commission plan. Here it also must be mentioned that both Jesse A. Parker who had been appointed but refused to serve on the Newport Board, and Dr. John R. Purdie, who later served on a District Board set up for the Town of Smithfield, were members of the School Commissioner Board.

Isle of Wight's First Public Schools

On the first day of January 1871 the Newport District Board met and agreed to maintain seven schools located as follow:

Town of Smithfield, three schools, one for white boys, one for white girls, and one Negro school.

The vicinity of Carroll's Shop, one white and one Negro school.

The neighborhood of Col. Darden's, one white, one Negro school.

These schools were located in the three sections of Newport District, and today would be found in the Town of Smithfield, at Carrollton, and near Orbit.

The Newport Board determined that the schools should run five months. Because of the uncertainty of the amount of State funds to be apportioned to the District, no decision was reached as to the salary to be paid the teachers.

On January 22nd of the same year the members of the Hardy District Board met and agreed to establish and maintain four schools, one in the vicinity of Burwell's Bay, one near Mill Swamp Church, one at Pulley's Old School House, and one at Bank's. Of these schools only the last named was for Negro children.

An interesting note in the Minutes of the Hardy Board is the reference to Pulley's Old School House, indicating that under the old regime a school had existed at that point, and that the Public School system was utilizing the location. Pulley's Old School House was near the present site of Raynor. Burwell's Bay is the modern Rushmere, and the ancient site of the Warraskoyack Indian tribe. Mill Swamp Baptist Church has been located at or near the present site since Colonial times.

There is no record to indicate what schools, if any, the Windsor Board established, but the report of visitations of Superintendent Morrison for 1871 mentions the following schools in that district; near Ducksville, near T. J. Clements, a Negro School, (place not given), near Franklin, Barber's Cross Roads, Carrsville, and Masonic Hall, Windsor. Ducksville is the present Walters, Barber's Cross Roads is now Indika. The school near T. J. Clements was up the Blackwater Road west of Windsor, about five miles. The school near Franklin was probably on the Council farm, likely what we call today, Camptown.

In his report to the State Superintendent, the Isle of Wight Boards reported twenty-five schools in 1871, twenty for whites and five for Negro pupils. Other schools mentioned in the 1871 Minutes are schools at E. P. Womble's, Zuni, Gravel Hill, and Bailey's Chapel.

Qualifications of Early Teachers

Under the 1871 public school system the local superintendent had to examine teachers and pass on their qualifications. Superintendent Morrison recorded that Certificate No. 1 in the Isle of Wight County Schools was given to Miss A. M. Uzzle, who had passed the "requisite examination." This lady was assigned to teach in the Burwell's Bay School. Certificate No. 2 was given to Miss Nellie Darden, niece of Col. Darden, Newport District School Board member, who was assigned to the Elm Grove School, near Col. Darden's. An interesting entry is that Col. Morrison "having passed the requisite examination" was given Certificate No. 5, and took charge of the boys school in Smithfield. In September 1871 Col. Darden resigned as a member of the Newport Board, passed the examination for a teacher, and was granted Certificate No. 3 for that school year. The Reverend John W. Ward, pastor of the Mill Swamp Baptist Church, was the first public school teacher at that point in the County. He was on the Hardy District School Board at the beginning of the session, but resigned October 1, 1872 to resume his position as teacher in the Mill Swamp School.

Isle of Wight County did not confine the selection of its early teachers to local men and women. A minute of October 11, 1871 states that Julia A. Smith and Louis G. Smith, colored, from Charlestown, Mass. were granted certificates Nos. 13 and 14. On May 18, 1872 Henry Bacon, born in Mecklenburg County, was authorized to teach in the public schools for one year.

As early as October 1871 the Isle of Wight County Superintendent accepted the examination given by a fellow-superintendent, Dr. J. F. Bryant, County Superintendent of Southampton County. Superintendent Morrison issued to Miss Julia E. Faircloth of Franklin, "having passed the requisite examination before Dr. Bryant." On November 5, 1871 Miss M. A. Ashburn "having shown a diploma from Wesleyan Female College was granted a certificate to teach in the public schools of the County for one year."

Qualifications to teach in the schools were gradually raised. During the session 1873-1874 examinations were given on six subjects, instead of the four originally listed. On August 26, 1873 a minute was made of a teacher "having passed the requisite examination in Orthography, Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, but not on Grammar and Geography, was granted a certificate in connection with the fact that the school she was to take being very little advanced." In April 1874 W. S. Holland, afterwards County Superintendent, was given a certificate, having passed on the six branches. The Reverend John W.

Ward, who successfully taught the school at Mill Swamp for many years, appears to be the first applicant to receive a certificate for longer than one year. He was granted "a certificate of the first class" for his examination October 17, 1874. Upon the recommendation of Dr. Bryant, Southampton County Superintendent, Miss M. E. Bryant, "a teacher of undoubtable ability for fifteen years in Southampton County," was granted a first class certificate March 1875. Jas. E. Vick, "a teacher of six years experience" in Southampton, was certificated in 1876, and assigned to the school at Great Mills, a few miles from Carrsville. The first professional certificate issued went to Mrs. C. D. Jordan on October 2, 1880. This certificate was for three years' duration.

There was other evidence of growth in the early teaching forces of the County. A special minute was entered on Monday, August 30, 1880:

Notice.

> "The following teachers have just returned from attendance for six weeks session Normal School at University of Virginia Viz,
>
> N. M. Purdie, B. C. Eley, N. P. Eley, Emily Brown, Julia A. Hodsden, Emma C. Hodsden, N. S. Darden, T. E. Womble, N. B. Mumford."

Early Teachers' Meetings

The Teachers' meetings in the early days also indicate growth in the profession. On August 19, 1872 the first

Teachers' Institute was held in the County. Superintendent Morrison was discouraged by the slim attendance of teachers, trustees and patrons. The speaker for the meeting was absent and the gathering resolved into an informal discussion group as to proper methods for teaching certain branches. Two trustees, Mr. E. P. Womble and Mr. Jesse Council; two teachers, Miss Faircloth of the Windsor School and Mrs. M. S. Jordan; the County Superintendent, and about a dozen other persons were present at the meeting described by Col. Morrison as adjourning "without much satisfactory results." Not a single teacher appeared for the meeting of June 1873, although the Institute had been advertised sufficiently for several weeks. The third attempt at a County Teachers' meeting was made on June 11, 1875 with a few teachers and trustees meeting with the local Superintendent. Superintendent Morrison stressed at this gathering the importance of regular attendance and the opportunity blackboards afforded in teaching subjects other than Arithmetic.

Teachers' meetings were more encouraging after the first three trials. On May 28, 1877 "the meeting was tolerably attended by teachers, trustees and friends of the schools." At this meeting Mr. Wm. F. Jordan was named Secretary and addresses were made by N. B. Mumford, William S. Holland, and James B. Vick, teachers in the schools, and by Superintendent Morrison. By resolution the last speaker was requested to

have his address published in the Suffolk paper. A committee of teachers were selected to decide upon the topic for the next meeting.

A combined Institute of the Southside Virginia Counties was held in Suffolk on December 27, 28, and 29, 1879. To this educational meeting went eight or nine of the Isle of Wight teachers and the County Superintendent of Schools. Superintendent Morrison delivered one of the principal addresses, and presided at many of the sessions.

Such interest had been built up for Teachers' meetings that when the Institute of 1880 was held on July 2nd, there were present twenty-two teachers and five trustees. Talks at this session were made by N. B. Mumford, J. A. Johnson, both teachers in the schools, T. J. Clements, at that time a trustee and Superintendent of Schools in 1860, and Col. Morrison. The Isle of Wight administrator emphasized in his talk planning for more regular attendance.

The Curriculum of the Early Schools

It is very likely that the one room schools of 1871 offered only instruction in four branches, Reading, Writing, Spelling and Arithmetic. At the beginning of the second session Superintendent Morrison announced to the Trustees that he wanted to raise the qualifications of the teachers, and soon thereafter teachers were examined on six branches instead of four.

The adoption of textbooks by the Board of Trustees on April 3, 1871 indicates that the school officials had planned a broader curriculum, and that the well-known three R's and Spelling had been joined by new subjects, Grammar and Geography.

The first adoption of textbooks in the Isle of Wight County Schools with the price of the book were listed:

Davies Primary Arithmetic	16 cents
Davies Intellectual Arithmetic	28 cents
Davies Elements of Written Arithmetic	31 cents
Davies Practical Arithmetic	57 cents
Maury First Lession in Geography	35 cents
Maury Intermediate Geography	73 cents
Maury Manual of Geography	1.31
Bullion School Grammar	30 cents
Bullion Practical Grammar	60 cents
McGuffey New Eclectic Spelling Book	12 cents
McGuffey New Eclectic 1st Reader	12 cents
McGuffey New Eclectic 2nd Reader	25 cents
McGuffey New Eclectic 3rd Reader	35 cents
McGuffey New Eclectic 4th Reader	40 cents
McGuffey New Eclectic 5th Reader	65 cents
McGuffey New Eclectic 6th Reader	75 cents

The adoption also suggests some grading of the children in the schools. In January of 1876 the Superintendent reports a visit to Mrs. C. D. Jordan's school and lists it as a "Graded School." In a visit to this school a year later, he commented that "many pupils were well-advanced."

The report made to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction in 1871 lists the number of pupils studying each subject in the public schools. Nine hundred and twenty-eight were reported as enrolling in the schools of Isle of Wight County: of these, eight hundred and ten studied Spelling; six hundred and fifty-two, Reading; five hundred and fifteen,

Writing; three hundred and eighty-five in Arithmetic; two hundred and ten, Grammar; two hundred and three, Geography; and, sixty-nine other subjects. It is not known what these other subjects were, but likely they were some of the classical subjects offered by the academies of that date. It will be noted that Spelling was the popular subject with 85% of the enrolled pupils taking that subject. Reading, Writing and Arithmetic were next in popularity with Grammar and Geography being studied by less than 25% of the enrolment.

Superintendent Morrison found many of his schools housed in uncomfortable buildings, with practically no furniture and lacking in teaching devices. As early as 1871 he designated three as "unfit for use." In his report to the Board of Supervisors in 1873 he asserted that school funds were insufficient for renting buildings, providing furniture and equipment, furnishing fuel and supplying books for indigent children. School after school was referred to as "in an uncomfortable building," "too small," "a great want of writing desks," "rather small." As late as 1877 he reported several schools as follow:

> "Little in way of furniture, wall maps, globes or blackboards"
> "No maps; no blackboards"
> "No maps; no boards"
> "No school furniture; not enough benches; no maps; no globe; no blackboard"
> "Small; deficient in benches; no arrangement for writing."

After ten years in office the first Superintendent of Isle of Wight Public Schools saw some improvement. He wrote the State Superintendent "after much solicitation nearly all the teachers have blackboards and use them, which I consider a great improvement" to the annual examinations given applicants for teaching positions, the Teachers' Institutes and the desire of the Isle of Wight teachers to learn new methods and better qualify themselves for the profession. He commented on some of the schools visited in 1881:

> "Colored School at James Tynes - has blackboards and wallmaps; good school"
> "Olivet house small, suggest to Trustees to turn this school and school at George Whitley's into one graded school next Fall"
> "Jacob A. Johnson's School - has blackboards, disciple, methods good; excellent school"
> "R. H. Eley's, Colored - house comfortable; has blackboards; school good"
> "George W. Gwaltney, Windsor Colored School - has blackboards, homemade"
> "J. C. Council's - has blackboards."

The first suggestion as to consolidation of schools was made in the 1881 report of Superintendent Morrison, when he suggested that Olivet and School at George Whitley's be consolidated and turned into a graded school.

Adding to the Early Curriculum

In connection with the growth of the curriculum during the superintendency of Col. Morrison is the acknowledgment February 27, 1871, of the receipt from Congressman John W.

The vaccine was given to the clerks of the District Boards for distribution to the schools. In October of the same year "one scab of vaccine matter" was received from G. W. Harris and distributed by the Superintendent to the various schools of Isle of Wight County. Undoubtedly the distribution of the vaccine was the beginning of the co-operation of Isle of Wight schools and Isle of Wight Health officials in wiping out small-pox through vaccination.

Early Struggles for Financial Support

Col. Morrison was well-adapted for the position of a pioneer school superintendent. He shared the devotion of the Governor and of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction to establish in Virginia a strong popular system of public schools. He knew that interest must be built in free schools; that financial support by the local taxpayers was necessary. Superintendent Morrison lost no time in carrying out his belief.

A meeting of the three District Boards was called on February 1, 1871 at the County Courthouse. The County Superintendent stated that the purpose of the meeting was to consider plans for raising additional local funds for public schools. He read the new school laws, and explained the duties of District School Trustees. Mr. Ashburne, Chairman of the Windsor District School Board moved:

> "That Col. E. M. Morrison, County Superintendent, be and is hereby directed to prepare and submit

> to the voters of the County, the question whether the County shall by a capitation tax of fifty cents raise additional funds for public school purposes; the vote to be taken at the next General Election."

The motion was carried and Superintendent Morrison and the Reverend John M. Ward were requested to address the people of the County on education and the public school system. A copy of the proceedings was also ordered to be published in the "Christian Sun" and the Norfolk "Virginian." Two weeks later Col. Morrison at the request of the Windsor Trustees visited and officially addressed the people of their district at Windsor Station.

At a second meeting to "consider plans to carry out the provisions of the school law and establish schools in every neighborhood throughout the County," the Trustees of the three District Boards in session at Isle of Wight Courthouse May 12, 1871 supplemented the capitation tax request. The School Trustees directed the Superintendent to prepare and propose the question to the voters of the County at the next General Election in May whether they favored a capitation tax of fifty cents and a property tax of two and one-half mills on the dollar to provide additional funds for school purposes. "By advice of the State Board of Education" the question to be submitted to the people was changed finally to read "fifty cents capitation and a property tax of one and one-half mills."

On the fourth Thursday in May 1871 Isle of Wight County

electors voted on the question "For And Against Taxation for Free Schools," with this vote:

For Capitation tax	316
Against Capitation tax	102
For Property tax	195
Against Property tax	246

The people of Isle of Wight County had voted their faith and belief in free schools by levying a capitation tax for educational purposes, although a property tax had been defeated by fifty-one votes. Very likely the late planning in adding a property tax to the ballot contributed to the defeat.

Superintendent Morrison did not drop his fight for additional funds to be raised locally by a tax on property. By order of the District Boards he again appeared before the County Board of Supervisors in May 1872. Chairman E. P. Womble of the Hardy Board, and Clerk T. J. Clements of the Windsor Board accompanied him. The Committee requested a one and one-half mill tax on property, for County School purposes, one mill, and a half a mill for District school purposes. The request for the fifteen cents tax on $100.00 was denied by one vote of the Supervisors, two to one. Supervisor Edgar Rawls of the Windsor District was recorded as voting for the original 15 cents proposal, and Supervisors W. A. Womble and James Thomas were recorded as voting against the plan. Then on motion by Supervisor Womble, the Board of Supervisors unanimously voted to levy a property tax of ten cents on

$100.00 valuation, leaving to the discretion of the School Trustees the application of the funds. Another victory had been won for the public schools in Isle of Wight County.

In June of the following year Superintendent Morrison continued his efforts for additional local funds to be raised by a County levy. He wrote the Board of Supervisors that every dollar of State funds coming to Isle of Wight County and not used for teachers' salaries in accordance with the law would have to be returned to the State Treasury. He called attention to the fact that it would be poor economy to lose all, or any considerable portion of the State funds by the failure of Isle of Wight County to raise local funds for County and District purposes as required by law. The Isle of Wight Superintendent insisted that the School Trustees had cut their estimates to the lowest figure consistent with their duty to the people, a large majority of whom, he asserted were in favor of public schools, and would pay, he thought without a murmur, the reasonable tax requested. A tax of fifteen cents on $100.00 had been estimated as necessary to run the schools for at least five months in every community of the County. The Board of Supervisors again levied a ten cent tax.

The struggle for financial assistance continued, and the School Boards in 1874 again requested the fifteen cent tax, and the Board of Supervisors again levied a ten cents school tax.

In 1875 the Isle of Wight County Trustees asked for a school tax of thirty cents, twenty cents of this to be used for County and ten for District school purposes. The Superintendent in his plea stated that the public school system was undoubtedly a fixed fact, and that the majority of the people had accepted it as such. He asserted that all of the private schools of the County had been done away with, and even the enemies of the free schools had found themselves forced to sustain the free schools. All classes were looking to the Trustees to make the schools of such character and grade as to meet the wants of the people. Superintendent Morrison claimed that this was impossible when insufficient funds necessitated short terms, uncomfortable houses, and nothing in the way of globes, maps, and other school furniture. In his plea to the Supervisors, Col. Morrison did not refer to salaries for teachers, probably holding to the theory that State school funds should be sufficient to care for this educational expense. It will be noted that he emphasized buildings and supplies. The County Board of Supervisors levied a fifteen cents tax.

Significant Statements of Isle of Wight's First Public School Superintendent

Many of the statements of Isle of Wight's first public school superintendent signify the evolving processes at work in the County schools. In his first written report to the

State Superintendent of Public Instruction he stated:

> "Public sentiment on the subject of free schools has undergone a radical change, the people beginning to understand that it is the cheapest and best method of educating their children, and, but for the unfortunate, much to be pitied element of our population (viz., Negroes) would meet with little opposition."

In the same report he recommended that teachers be paid at least $40.00 a month. In his report for the second year of his term he asserted:

> "The public schools are popular with the great majority of the people and the only opposition advanced against them is the method of raising the funds by which they are principally carried on-viz., the tax on property and not a capitation tax. Of course the Constitution has settled that question.
>
> I do not like the present mode of raising local school funds. By taking the power out of the hands of the people and giving it to the Board of Supervisors, nothing was gained as to promoting the system, save the trouble and expense of annual elections. The people in electing Supervisors take no account of their friendship or hostility to the public school system, for it is an office not generally sought by anyone. . . The General Assembly ought in my opinion modify . . . the present school law and take the responsibility of raising funds for all school purposes."

Thus over ninety years ago the Superintendent of Schools of Isle of Wight County advanced and advocated a State financed public school system.

The next year he reported that the popularity of the public schools was decidedly on the increase and in 1874 that the popularity of the public schools would be universal if

their number and grade were sufficient to meet the wants of all classes of society. The popularity of the public schools was reported as universal in 1876 with the "only question now about a few more schools and longer terms."

In 1880 he reported:

> "Certainly education has been much more disseminated. Hundreds of children read and write where parents can not, and generally an appreciation and desire for education has been promoted."

In reports of his visitations in 1881 Superintendent Morrison commented on the great need of books for indigent children, and why there should not be a school for white children at Carrsville.

Education of Negroes

In the first year of the public school system the Isle of Wight school authorities had provided for five schools for Negroes. These were located at Smithfield, Gravel Hill, Bailey's Chapel, Orbit, and one in Windsor District. There was an increase of one Negro school by 1875, and in 1880 thirteen were reported for Isle of Wight County. Col. Morrison had reported on the difficulty of securing Negro teachers and even had qualified several Negro teachers from the North. As early as 1872 he had reported that the Negroes of the County were manifesting a great desire for education. A report of one of the Superintendent's visitations in 1881

illustrates the interest the Negroes were taking in their schools. The account was of a visit to the school one mile east of Windsor. The building, so Col. Morrison reported, and the fact is substantiated by persons living in the community to-day, was constructed by the teacher, George Gwaltney, at his own expense. In this school the Superintendent found blackboards and maps, the blackboards also made by the teacher. The building was reported as being excellent. George Gwaltney taught the Negro youths of the Windsor community for over forty years and rendered a splendid service to his race. He retired in the early 1920's.

Growth of Schools

During the first session of the public schools there were twenty-five schools established in Isle of Wight County. Twenty of these were for white children. The average term of all of the schools was 4.1 months. Nine hundred and twenty-eight pupils were enrolled with four hundred and ninety-three in daily average attendance. From State school funds $2669.00 was received, and teachers paid $2566.97.

The number of schools in 1880 had reached forty-four, thirty-one of these for white pupils. The average term taught was 5 months. Fourteen hundred and forty pupils were enrolled with daily average attendance of nine hundred and thirty-six. From State funds the County received $3900.00, and paid its teachers $5147.78.

It can be seen that while Isle of Wight County did not contribute anything for Instruction in 1871, in 1880 $1247.78 of these costs, or approximately 25%, came from local funds.

End of the First Superintendency

In 1881 the Readjusters gained control of the State government. State Superintendent Ruffner and fifty-four county superintendents failed to be confirmed by the Virginia Senate for the new term beginning January 1, 1882. Among the fifty-four was Superintendent Morrison, who had served Isle of Wight County schools from the beginning of the public school system.

Col. Morrison continued as a teacher and surveyor in his home County. In 1907 he prepared and had published a history of Isle of Wight County for use at the Jamestown Exposition. After a long and respected service he died in 1932 at his home in Smithfield.

Superintendent William S. Holland

The second superintendent of Isle of Wight County Public Schools was Mr. William S. Holland. He also was a native of Isle of Wight County, having been born near Windsor. Superintendent Holland was a graduate of Richmond College from which institution he received an academic training and a degree in law in 1880. Prior to graduation from Richmond College he had been a teacher in the schools of the County. At the time

he was selected Isle of Wight County Superintendent of Schools he was practicing law with an office in Windsor. He qualified for office on January 9, 1882 and served one four-year term as County Superintendent.

Growth of Schools Under Superintendent Holland

Isle of Wight County Schools continued their growth under the direction of Superintendent Holland. The schools increased in number, both the enrollment and the attendance became greater, the term was lengthened, and a larger amount expended for teachers' salaries.

Graded Schools

In one of his last reports of visitations to the schools, Col. Morrison had suggested bringing together two small one-room schools to form a graded school. The 1885 report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction indicates that during the superintendency of Mr. Holland several of these consolidations were made, or that some of the schools had grown so as to make two teachers necessary. Below is a table showing the names of the schools, the name of the Principal, and the roll and attendance for the 1885 session:

Name of School	Principal	No. Teachers	Roll	Attendance
Smithfield	J. W. Ward	2	60	33
Mill Swamp	E. M. Pilcher	2	67	29
Windsor	C. P. Smith	2	70	41
Carrsville	C. W. Duke	2	69	39

Great Mill	Nellie Marshall	2	51	36
Sycamore Lawn	Anna M. Lawrence	2	53	38

Popularity of Free Schools

Superintendent Holland in 1884 reported that the free schools were popular with the people of Isle of Wight County, and that sentiment for the public school system was good and steadily growing better, so much so in fact that there was that year only two private schools in the County.

From the comparisons following some idea can be formed how the public schools had grown in popular favor since their inauguration in 1871 to 1885. In 1885 the roll had risen to 2384, or an increase of 1656 over that of 1871; the attendance had gone up to 1285, 792 better than the first session; the number of teachers had increased to 56, 31 more than in 1871; the term had increased to a 7.2 months session instead of the 4.1 months session in 1871. There was also an increase in the amounts paid for teachers' salaries, the amounts received from State funds, and the local funds to supplement the State funds for teachers' salaries. Salaries had increased $4197.00, State funds had increased $2403.00 and Local Funds in Salaries had increased $1691.00.

In 1871 Isle of Wight County, like other counties in the State, paid nothing on teachers' salaries. In 1885 apparently 25% of the salaries came from Local Funds.

While Isle of Wight County schools were growing in size,

number and popularity with the people, many of the boys and girls were not being reached either by the free schools, or the few remaining private schools. The 1885 census tabulated in the Superintendent's Report of that year, indicates that barely three-fifths of the white children could read, and only one-half of them could write; that only one-half of the Negro children could read, and less than one-third could write. These figures are for children ages 7-21.

Bruce, it will be recalled, in a study of deeds and dispositions of the 17th century showed that approximately 58% of the men and 10% of the women in Isle of Wight County signed their names to these documents, indicating that there was a high percentage of illiteracy even among the matured and better-to-do class of the people. The census figures of 1885, while pointing out that the schools of Isle of Wight County still had a long way to go to meet the needs of its boys and girls, do give evidence, especially in the age-groups from twelve to twenty-one, of the work being done in the free schools.

Superintendent Gavin Rawls

In 1886 the old-line Democrats returned to power in Virginia, and the State Board of Education nominated Dr. Gavin Rawls for Superintendent of the Isle of Wight County Schools. His selection by the State Board was confirmed by the Virginia Senate and he became the third superintendent of public schools of the County.

Dr. Rawls was born at Carrsville, Virginia, August 11, 1858. He received his academic training at Richmond College and his professional training for medicine at the Medical College of Virginia. He began his practice of medicine at Carrsville in 1876. Altogether he was County Superintendent of Isle of Wight schools for thirty-six years.

Dr. Rawls was a man of many talents, talents he used freely for the advancement of the schools and the people of his native County. He was a faithful family doctor, a most capable orator, and a leader in the religious life of his community.

There were three rather distinct periods in the superintendency of Dr. Rawls. For the first fifteen years (1885-1900) there was only a slow growth in the schools; the second period of ten years (1900-1910) was more of a transition from the schools of yesterday to the schools of today; the third period beginning in 1910 was characterized by a reawakening in education.

Period 1885-1900

During the first fifteen years under Superintendent Rawls the growth of the schools was slow, yet there was interest manifested in free schools. In a report to the State Board of Education in 1887 the Isle of Wight Superintendent stated that much interest was being taken in the public

schools of the County, and that private schools were being generally supplanted. Among his suggestions that year for the improvement of the school system was one that State school funds should be increased in order that the schools might maintain an eight or nine months session. He was of the belief that if this was done, District School Boards would be enabled to secure better and more competent teachers. Such teachers, he maintained, would give the schools the confidence and respect of the best people, and thereby build up a healthy public sentiment. Superintendent Rawls also suggested that the efficiency of the schools might be improved by paying trustees enough to justify their giving time and attention to the schools.

Dr. Rawls carried on the fight for increased financial support for the schools. Not only did he feel that State school funds should be greater, but he felt that local school funds should be increased. In his 1890-1891 report to the State Board of Education he wrote, "I am endeavoring to have the Supervisors increase the County levy so as to give us more money, enabling us to lengthen the term. Have arranged to pay certain grade teachers a better salary."

Superintendent Rawls was not successful in having the County Board of Supervisors increase the school tax rate. In fact, from the time Col. Morrison secured an increase from ten to fifteen cents in 1875, until 1900 there was no

increase in tax rates for public schools in Isle of Wight County. There were slight increases in the amounts received by the School Boards from local sources, probably because of the increasing valuations placed on taxable property.

In 1900 the roll of Isle of Wight schools had increased to 2497, the attendance to 1382, the number of teachers to 66, and the average session to 5.2 months. The County received from the State $7833.00 in funds and contributed for teachers' salaries $2770.00. There was an increase of only 113 pupils enrolled over the fifteen year period with an increase in attendance of 97. Ten teachers were added to the teaching force upping the salaries paid $3840.00. The average school term had declined from a little over seven months to slightly over five months.

For the first twenty years of the public school system Isle of Wight County owned no school buildings. It was not until 1890 that a State Report indicated possession of school property. That year a valuation of $1400.00 was placed on the school property owned by the District School Boards. Five years later a valuation of $3150.00 was given, and in 1900 values of school property was $4350.00. The boys and girls of the County went to schools conducted in private homes, in old homes, such as the Masonic Hall at Windsor, or to a small building erected on private property, probably by the patrons of the school. In Smithfield use was made of the old

Elizabeth Smith School, and the Smithfield Academy buildings.

The 1900-1910 Period

The first ten years of the 20th Century were years of transition in Isle of Wight public education. The small one and two room schools had served the 19th Century; the children of the new Century were to see many changes in Virginia education. A spirit of educational revival was sweeping the South. Virginia experienced her famous "May Campaign of 1905" to arouse her people. The Mann bill had been enacted by the Virginia Assembly to provide the State with high schools.

Changes at Smithfield

From 1871 until 1906 the free school in the Town of Smithfield was housed in the old Smithfield Academy building. Many of the Smithfield people were not satisfied with the educational facilities of the public school system and patronized private schools in the Town. One of the best known of these private schools was the Eley School, the property of which was purchased by a company of Smithfield men in 1899. This company established and maintained the Smithfield Male and Female Institute until 1906, when the Town Council of Smithfield bought the property to replace the old Academy building.

It may be said now that the old Academy building is still standing, and that an organization in the Town is now

(1963) working to restore the building. It is sad to relate, however, that the building housing the Elizabeth Smith School was torn down in recent years.

During the 1906-1907 session State Examiner Willis A. Jenkins visited the Smithfield School. The report of his visit in the State Superintendent's Report says:

> "The first point visited in Isle of Wight County was Smithfield. Here were two schools, a public school and a private academy. The territory supplying pupils for these schools was not sufficient to make two good schools. If the public school improved the academy went down; if the academy went forward the public school lost ground. The people of Smithfield were divided into rival factions, and the educational interests were divided. This is all changed now and a healthy sentiment for schools exists. This sentiment follows a struggle which resulted in a complete union of rival forces.
>
> The old school had ninety pupils, three teachers, inadequate building, practically no apparatus, an inefficient high school department and conditions generally unsatisfactory.
>
> The new school has 217 pupils, eight teachers, a fair building, and is accumulating approved apparatus. The high school is organized for a four-year course and the united school is a great improvement on either school as they existed before.
>
> The effect of this step at Smithfield was to stimulate the school interest all over the County, and the rival school at the Courthouse immediately showed decided activity. Two new rooms were added and this school has become a very creditable high school.
>
> Other consolidations have followed and the work of improving the schools of Isle of Wight is being pushed by Superintendent Gavin Rawls. The District levies have been

> more than doubled, from seven and one-half cents to fifteen, and from ten to thirty.... The length of the school term has increased from five to seven months and from six to eight months, Smithfield running nine months. Eight schools have been consolidated."

High and Graded Schools
Isle of Wight County 1904-1905

Superintendent Rawls had reported for the session 1904-1905 eight schools in Isle of Wight County as public high schools or graded schools offering some high school branches. These schools were Smithfield, Isle of Wight, Windsor, Darden's Cross Roads, Carrollton Graded, Rescue Graded, Battery Park, and Mill Swamp Graded. The attendance for 1910 was reported 1602 of 2640 on roll. In the ten year period the number of teachers was reported as 58, a decrease of 8.

During the transition period there was a fair increase in pupils enrolled, and a good increase in attendance. The term had increased almost by one-fourth. Probably because of some consolidation there was a decrease in the number of teachers.

In 1919 teachers' salaries had increased to $18,303.00, the State school funds to $12,402.00, and local funds $5901.00. It will be noted that notwithstanding the decrease in the number of teachers total salaries had increased greatly. This was due partly to a 58% increase in State school funds, but at the same time the amount from local sources for